



Legislation Text

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Work Session to Accept Public Comments on the San Leandro General Plan 2035 Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) (SCH#2001092001)

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

This report is for information only, and no action is required. The purpose of this June 16, 2016 public meeting is to receive comments from the public and the Planning Commission on the adequacy of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) that has been prepared for the City's Draft General Plan Update (General Plan 2035).

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the DEIR was prepared by the City of San Leandro Community Development Department. The DEIR was released for public review on June 1, 2016 for a 45-day public review and comment period. A Notice of Availability (NOA) of the DEIR was distributed to State, local and stakeholder agencies, emailed to over 400 people on the General Plan 2035 interested parties list, and posted on the City's website.

The DEIR may be found on the City of San Leandro General Plan 2035 website at <http://www.sanleandro2035.org/documents/> and copies may be reviewed at the San Leandro Main Library (located at 300 Estudillo Avenue) and the City's Community Development Department at 835 E. 14th Street during normal business hours. Hard copies or a CD of the DEIR may also be obtained at the Community Development Department.

The 45-day public comment period on the DEIR will end on July 15, 2016. In addition to all comments made at this public meeting, written comments are encouraged. All written comments related to the Draft EIR should be directed to Tom Liao, Deputy Community Development Director, Community Development Department, 835 E. 14th Street, San Leandro, CA 94577 (fax: 510-577-6007), tliao@sanleandro.org. All written comments must be received by 5:00 p.m. on July 15, 2016. After the close of the public comment period, written responses will be prepared that address all written and oral comments on environmental issues in the DEIR. The City will prepare a Final EIR (FEIR) containing the public comments and written responses. The Planning Commission and the City Council will have an opportunity to review all comments and responses, and will consider certification of the EIR prior to taking any action on the proposed General Plan Update project (Project).

No decisions will be made on the DEIR at tonight's public meeting. Furthermore, staff will not be responding to comments on the DEIR at this meeting, but instead will consider all written and oral comments received that address environmental issues and will respond thoughtfully and comprehensively in writing in the FEIR.

Once the FEIR is released, all comments and related responses will be available to the commenters, the decision-makers, as well as the rest of the public. The Planning Commission will consider the FEIR at a public hearing on the Project, tentatively scheduled for August 25, 2016. Once the Planning Commission makes its recommendations on the FEIR certification and the Project, the City

Council will consider and certify the FEIR before taking action on the Project.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Location of the Project/Draft EIR Study Area

The City of San Leandro is centrally located in Alameda County in the East Bay. The City is generally bound by the City of Oakland to the north, San Francisco Bay to the west, Castro Valley to the east, and the unincorporated Alameda County communities of San Lorenzo and Ashland to the south.

The City is accessed from the regional roadway network by I-238, I-580, and I-880. San Leandro is served by Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and AC Transit. The BART line runs north-south through the city. San Leandro is served by two BART stations: the San Leandro station is located just west of downtown, and the Bay Fair BART station is located near the Bayfair Center mall.

Several railroad lines also run through the city, including Amtrak's Capitol Corridor and Coast Starlight routes. However, there are no Amtrak stations located in San Leandro. Two Union Pacific Railroad freight lines run through the city in a north-south direction.

The EIR Study Area consists of all land within the city limit of San Leandro. The city limit encompasses an area of approximately 15.5 square miles, which includes approximately 2 square miles of San Francisco Bay. The City has authority over land use and other governmental actions within the non-tidal portion of this area. Certain unincorporated areas outside of the city limit may have a San Leandro mailing address and may receive certain services from the city.

Project Description

The proposed General Plan 2035 replaces the City's existing General Plan (General Plan 2015), which was last comprehensively updated in 2002. The proposed General Plan Update is intended to guide development and conservation in the city through the 2035 buildout horizon of the General Plan. State law requires that the General Plan contain seven elements: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Open Space, Noise, Safety, and Conservation. The content of these elements is outlined in State law. The General Plan Update includes all State-required elements and some optional elements, including the following: Land Use; Transportation; Open Space, Parks, and Conservation; Environmental Hazards; Economic Development; and Historic Preservation and Community Design . The 2015-2023 Housing Element was adopted by the city in January 2015 and certified by State Housing and Community Development in February 2015; it is not part of the current General Plan Update, however, the update considered and is consistent with the Housing Element.

For most of San Leandro, including single-family residential neighborhoods and the Downtown area, the current land use designations established by the 2002 General Plan would remain unchanged. The proposed Plan removes the Office land use designation and includes the following new land use designations:

- Medium-High Density Residential
- Bay Fair Transit-Oriented Development

- Industrial Transition

The majority of proposed changes to the General Plan land use map consist of the re-designation of sites that are currently designated as Office since the Office designation will be eliminated, or the application of the new land use designations to sites that are currently designated for other land uses. Implementation of the proposed project is projected to allow development accommodating approximately 5,595 new housing units, 14,790 new residents, and 12,130 new jobs in 2035. The project includes a series of Zoning Ordinance amendments to make the zoning consistent with the proposed General Plan Update.

For a detailed description of the proposed Project, please see Chapter 3, Project Description, of the DEIR.

Scope of the Draft EIR

The DEIR assesses the potential impacts of the proposed General Plan 2035. The following environmental topics are addressed in the DEIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils, and Seismicity
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Recreation
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

Due to the existing urbanization of the EIR Study Area, no environmental impacts associated with agricultural and forestry resources and mineral resources are expected to occur as a result of the proposed Project. These resource topics therefore were not addressed further in the DEIR.

Significant and Unavoidable Impacts Identified in the Draft EIR

Section 15126.2 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that “direct and indirect significant effects of the project on the environment shall be clearly identified and described, giving due consideration to both the short-term and long term effects.”

Chapter 1, Executive Summary, contains Table 1-1, which summarizes the impacts, mitigation measures, and levels of significance before and after mitigation. While actions from the Project and mitigation measures, where feasible, would reduce the level of impact to less than significant in most cases, the impacts listed below would remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation measures

are applied. In many cases, development allowed under the proposed Project would contribute to each of these significant and unavoidable impacts, but would not be the sole cause of the impact. These impacts or similar impacts are likely to occur in San Leandro over the next 20 years due to regional growth, regardless of whether the City adopts the updated General Plan and related Zoning Ordinance Amendments.

Air Quality

- **AQ-2a. Significant and unavoidable.** The General Plan proposes policies that would reduce criteria air pollutants in future implementing development. Additional measures to reduce criteria air pollutant emissions would be considered during individual project-level review based on site-specific and project-specific characteristics and could further reduce significant impacts. However, because those projects and measures cannot be known at this time, the impact is considered significant and unavoidable.
- **AQ-2b: Significant and unavoidable.** Criteria air pollutant emissions associated with future project construction activities would generate a substantial net increase in emissions that exceeds the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) significance thresholds. Over the 20+ year horizon of the proposed Plan, many individual projects would be constructed in the city. The General Plan identifies policies to reduce construction emissions but additional measures could be required for specific future development. The City cannot presently predict either the project-specific emissions or appropriate additional mitigations that could be certain to reduce the emissions of each individual project to a less-than-significant level, and the impact is considered significant and unavoidable.
- **AQ-5. Significant and unavoidable.** Air pollutant emissions associated with the proposed General Plan would result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to air quality impacts. No additional mitigations beyond Plan policies are currently available, and cumulative impacts would be significant.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- **GHG-2: Significant and unavoidable.** Executive Order B-30-15 and Executive Order S-03-05 identify long term GHG reduction goals of 80 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2050 based on existing technologies and currently adopted policies and programs. The City has a Climate Action Plan (CAP), adopted in 2009, to achieve the GHG reduction goals of Assembly Bill (AB) 32 for year 2020. At this time there are no post-2020 federal and state measures that would assist the City in achieving the efficiency target at the proposed project year. Therefore, Impact GHG-2 would remain significant and unavoidable.

Noise

- **NOI-3: Significant and unavoidable.** The project would cause a substantial permanent increase in ambient transportation-related noise levels in the City. Mitigation that would prevent these noise increases would be economically impractical, scientifically unachievable, outside the City's jurisdiction, and/or inconsistent with City planning goals and objectives. Thus, impacts would remain significant and unavoidable because no feasible mitigation measures are available to prevent or reduce noise impacts to a less than significant level.
- **NOI-7. Significant and unavoidable.** The project would result in significant and unavoidable cumulatively excessive noise levels within the city. As noted above under NOI-3, there are no feasible mitigations for preventing substantial increases in ambient noise levels. Thus, cumulative noise impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

Traffic

TRAF-1. Significant and unavoidable. Implementation of the proposed General Plan, in combination with regional growth outside of San Leandro, would result in increased vehicle traffic, which would affect the operations of local intersections and freeway segments. As shown in Table 4.13-15 (in Chapter 4.13 of the DEIR), the addition of proposed Plan traffic would result in significant impacts to 15 intersections during at least one of the peak hours. As shown in Table 4.13-16 and Table 4.13-17 (in Chapter 4.13 of the DEIR), the addition of proposed Plan traffic would result in significant impacts to eight freeway segments during at least one of the peak hours. Mitigation Measures TRAF-1A and TRAF 1-B (in Chapter 4.13 of the DEIR) identify improvements to improve intersection and freeway segment operations. Because the City cannot guarantee that all of the improvements are feasible, the impacts remain significant and unavoidable.

- **TRAF-2. Significant and unavoidable.** The General Plan would cause the volume-to-capacity (v/c) ratio on the northbound segment of Doolittle Drive to increase by 0.04 under Year 2040 conditions in the AM peak hour, which exceeds acceptable thresholds. Increased vehicle traffic under the General Plan would significantly affect mixed flow transit operations. Mitigations could reduce these impacts, but may not be feasible. Therefore, this is considered a significant and unavoidable impact.

Alternatives

The DEIR analyzes alternatives to the Project that are designed to reduce the significant environmental impacts of the Project and feasibly attain most of the Project objectives. The following alternatives to the Project were considered and analyzed in detail:

- No Project
- Reduced Industrial Development Alternative

Chapter 6, Alternatives to the Project, includes a complete discussion of these alternatives and of alternatives that were rejected for various reasons.

No Project Alternative

Consistent with Section 15126.6(e)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines, under the No Project Alternative, the proposed General Plan Update nor the proposed Zoning Code amendments would be adopted. Future development in the city would continue to be subject to existing policies, regulations, development standards, and land use designations under the existing San Leandro General Plan and Zoning Code. The General Plan land use map for the No Project Alternative would be the same as the City's current General Plan land use map. Total acreages of various land use designations would not differ drastically between the proposed Project and the No Project Alternative. However, the No Project Alternative would not include the new higher density residential land use or transit-oriented development designations of the proposed Project, nor would it include the increases in allowable residential densities associated with the proposed Zoning Code amendments. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would result in less residential development than the proposed Project. In terms of job growth, the No Project Alternative would not include the proposed Industrial Transition designation or the proposed Economic Development Element, with its job-generating focus on innovation, and local manufacturing and technology sector growth. While the No Project Alternative might result in a similar amount of non-residential square footage by 2035, that square footage would more likely be warehousing or traditional manufacturing, containing a lower proportion of employees per square foot and therefore fewer jobs.

Reduced Industrial Development Alternative

In the Reduced Industrial Development Alternative, portions of the General Industrial land use designation of the proposed Project would be converted to residential uses. This would have the benefit of reducing new sources of Toxic Air Contaminants (TACs) from industrial uses, such as chemical processing, chrome-plating, plastics manufacturing, printing and photography, auto painting, food packaging, and decreasing facilities that would potentially be located near new sensitive receptors. Under this Alternative, proposed residential densities throughout the city would be slightly decreased overall, resulting in the same total number of housing units as the proposed Project, yet spread over a greater area of San Leandro. The reduced potential for new industry associated with this Alternative means that job growth would be less

than that of the proposed Project, and more consistent with 2035 ABAG projections (see Table 6-1 in Chapter 6 of the DEIR). In addition, the proposed Zoning Amendments, in particular the proposed zoning map amendments, would be tailored to be consistent with a General Plan land use map that supports the Reduced Industrial Development Alternative.

ATTACHMENTS

The Planning Commission received the Draft EIR in hard copy and CD and the DEIR was made available online for the public as of June 1, 2016 at <http://www.sanleandro2035.org/documents/>). A copy of the DEIR may be reviewed at the San Leandro Main Library (located at 300 Estudillo Avenue) and the City's Community Development Department at 835 E. 14th Street during normal business hours until the end of the DEIR public comment period on July 15, 2016. Below is a summary of the Draft EIR of the General Plan 2035 by Chapter:

- **Chapter 1: Executive Summary.** Summarizes environmental consequences that would result from implementation of the Project, describes recommended mitigation measures, and indicates the level of significance of environmental impacts before and after mitigation.
- **Chapter 2: Introduction.** Provides an overview describing the Draft EIR document.
- **Chapter 3: Project Description.** Describes the proposed project in detail, including the characteristics, objectives, and the structural and technical elements of the proposed action.
- **Chapter 4: Environmental Evaluation.** Organized into 14 sub-chapters corresponding to the environmental resource categories identified in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, this section provides a description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the proposed project as they existed at the time the Notice of Preparation was published, from both a local and regional perspective. Additionally, this chapter provides an analysis of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project, and recommended mitigation measures, if required, to reduce the impacts to less than significant where possible. The environmental setting included in each sub-chapter provides baseline physical conditions, which provide a context for the lead agency to determine the significance of environmental impacts resulting from the proposed project. Each sub-chapter also includes a description of the thresholds used to determine if a significant impact would occur; the methodology to identify and evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed project; and the potential cumulative impacts associated with the proposed project.
- **Chapter 5: Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts.** Identifies impacts that cannot be mitigated to a less-than-significant level, and therefore would remain significant and unavoidable.
- **Chapter 6: Alternatives to the Proposed Project.** Considers alternatives to the proposed project, including the CEQA-required "No Project" Alternative and a Reduced Industrial Alternative.
- **Chapter 7: CEQA-Mandated Sections.** Discusses growth inducement, cumulative impacts, unavoidable significant effects, and significant irreversible changes as a result of the proposed project.
- **Chapter 8: Organizations and Persons Consulted.** Lists the people and organizations that were contacted during the preparation of this EIR for the proposed Project.
- **Appendices:** The appendices for this document (presented in PDF format on a CD attached to the back cover) contain the following supporting documents:
 - Appendix A: Notice of Preparation (NOP) and NOP Comment Letters
 - Appendix B: Proposed Zoning Code Amendments
 - Appendix C: Buildout Methodology
 - Appendix D: Planning Considerations for Sea Level Rise
 - Appendix E: Planning Considerations for Siting a New Receptor Proximate to Major Sources of Air Pollution
 - Appendix F: Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Data
 - Appendix G: Noise Data
 - Appendix H: Transportation and Traffic Data

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